THOMISM VINDICATED

FROM ITS ALLEGED CONDEMNATION BY THE CONSTITUTION *UNIGENITUS*

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TO THE READER (*By Fr. Charles-René Billuart*)

This letter was written right at the start of all the big arguments and fights [over the papal bull Unigenitus]. It could have been published back then, but a similar Latin book that came out around the same time (with almost the same goal) got stopped from being printed. Still, this letter has a different style and approach compared to that first book. Plus, it's almost impossible for two separate people writing on the exact same topic to agree on absolutely everything. So, people thought: this won't be totally unpleasant for the public to read. It might even help remind those who still refuse to accept the Bull today—because they think it condemns the teachings of Saint Thomas Aquinas—that they're wrong.

It could also shut down the vain bragging of others who foolishly celebrate this supposed "condemnation" as if it were some real, huge victory. That's why the author—who was also prompted by his friends—has finally decided to release it to the public now. He's touched it up a bit in places, based on new information and events that have come up since then. We hope God will bless his good intentions even more, because despite all the false accusations thrown at him and the harshness of these current fights, he has

managed to stay moderate and charitable the whole time—which is how the defense of truth should always be done.

We ask the picky/puritanical reader to be patient and overlook certain terms or ways of speaking from the School [of Thomism], which we can't really avoid when dealing with topics that belong so specifically to it. These delicate questions sometimes force us to use precise expressions from the School.

We also want to make clear that we do NOT intend to blame ALL Jesuits for the injustices and prejudices we criticize here against some members of that group. We know several of them who are more fair and respectful toward the School of Saint Thomas Aquinas—their first and main teacher. They are far from confusing true doctrine with the errors of the time. On the contrary, they see it as their duty and merit to clearly mark the difference [between true Thomistic teaching and modern errors].

This is a justice the author believes he owes them. And he does it all the more willingly because these men are distinguished in their Society by their rank, piety, and learning. Their sincere admission [of the true doctrine] should be strong evidence in favor of the cause he defends against the unjust claims of some of their fellow Jesuits.

In the form of a Letter to an Abbot.

MONSIEUR,

YOU complain that a rumor disadvantageous to the School of St. Thomas is spreading, that by an odious reproach it is openly said that its sentiments on grace & on free will, drawn into the same misfortune as those of Father Quesnel, are condemned by the new Bull Unigenitus of Clement XI. The Jesuits, you say, reproach us for it, & applaud themselves for it as a complete & irreversible victory: the Quesnelists reproach us for it, & affecting a conformity of doctrine with ours, they seem to groan, & blame us for not groaning with them, & for not declaring ourselves like them against the Constitution.

I cannot, Monsieur, but be very obliged to you for the part you take in our interests, & for the zeal with which you defend the justice of our cause, which I believe to be that of the truth. Yes, your complaints are just; those who complain of the [Jesuit] Society as well as of the contrary party (Jansenists and Quesnelists) who make us this reproach, are certainly mistaken: & I dare to say without flattery that we have more reason to

complain of their blindness or their stubbornness than they have to reproach us for this condemnation. Among the propositions condemned of Father Quesnel, those which in the chimerical idea of our Adversaries seem to have some relation to the sentiments of our School, are only a repetition of the errors of Jansenius; this is what the Sovereign Pontiff declares in his Bull, & what the Bishops of France recognize from one & the other party. Or who does not know that between us & the Jansenists, there is an absolute difference; & that in the repeated condemnations of this Heresy, the doctrine on grace that is effective by its own power—exactly as our School [Thomistic theology], following St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, has always taught—has never been stained or attacked in the slightest way. No one has even raised this as an issue.

Popes Innocent X and Alexander VII declared this openly in words and in their official Briefs. The Jesuits themselves defended it openly in their writings against the Jansenists—for example, Fathers Annat, Etienne Dechamps, and Martininon. And brilliant Dominican scholars like Gonet, Contenson, Massoulié, Vincent Baron, and others from the Order of St. Dominic proved it solidly and unbeatable through their theological defenses and apologies.

So, all we'd need to do is point our unfair accusers back to these sources to shut them down and prove they're powerless. We could tell them exactly what St. Augustine once said to Julian: "We've already answered—you can't say anything new. So be quiet if you can… but you can't even do that." Perhaps someone might claim that among the later condemned propositions [from Father Quesnel], a few use wording that seems closer to our views. Perhaps someone might argue that a few of the later condemned propositions [from Quesnel] use wording that seems closer to our [Thomistic] views than to Jansen's. Even if we grant this objection (though it's false), it doesn't change anything I've said earlier—because fundamentally, it's the same thing.

Pope Clement XI, in his new Bull [Unigenitus], had no intention (as he himself states, and as the French Church acknowledges) of condemning an old error just because it's been rephrased in new words. But alright, let's set Jansenism aside for a second and focus only on the latest Constitution [Unigenitus]. Some say: "We accept it, but our doctrine still gets tainted by it." In reality, the bishops who gathered in Paris on this issue in 1713 and 1714 must then have been—according to people who talk this way—either good-hearted but totally ignorant, or wildly biased fans of our School [Thomism]. Because if the bull really contained this supposed condemnation

[of Thomistic teaching], they would have spotted it. Instead, quite the opposite: Those bishops drew their wise Instruction straight from our own [Thomistic] principles. And they generously admitted—with a fairness that will forever honor both us and their memory, and earn our lasting gratitude—that the School of Saint Thomas alone would be enough to refute the doctrine in the condemned propositions. *Even though Jansenius's defenders often misuse the authority of this holy Doctor [Aquinas] for their own ends.* The other bishops, *those not in the main assembly,* give us just as much credit. As the learned Bishop of Soissons put it in his first Avertissement (n. 22, p. 23): "If a bishop had to pick a system, I'd much rather choose that of the Thomists, and I'd join them in holding to this grace—grace efficacious by itself." The Constitution [Unigenitus] doesn't change that one bit. In this matter it doesn't touch the dogma of the Faith at all, nor does it harm the rights of this famous School in the slightest. Finally, the Pope himself, in his recent letters Pastoralis Officii etc., doesn't he explicitly declare that he never intended to condemn the views of the Catholic Schools which they have, as it were, apparently given themselves the freedom to support them, and which they do in fact support in Rome and under the very eyes [of the authorities]

Would it be necessary, Monsieur, to do even more to convince less prejudiced minds? Could one demand apologies that are more authentic and less suspect regarding the Catholicity of our doctrine? Could we ourselves wish for testimonies that are more advantageous? But you ask me for something more particular: a clear and sensible difference, in plain terms, between our sentiments and the condemned propositions. To satisfy you, then, as far as my own lights permit, I will begin by explaining to you the different systems on the matters in question, drawn from the principles and the very words of their authors.

SYSTEM OF THE THOMISTS ON GRACE AND FREE WILL

The School of St. Thomas recognizes:

1. The necessity of two graces for every good act. One is sufficient grace, the other efficacious grace. **2.** That sufficient grace is given, or at least offered, to all men; efficacious grace is granted only to some. **3.** That both the one and the other are absolutely gratuitous. 4. That efficacious grace is such by itself—that is to say, through the whole power of God and by the sovereign dominion He has over His creatures. **5.** That this efficacy of grace in no way prejudices the free will of man.

Here, in summary, are the principles on which the Thomists, following St. Thomas, establish these truths.

NECESSITY OF TWO GRACES

1. God is the first cause and the immediate Author of all natural beings and all supernatural gifts.

2. Man is a secondary cause, subordinate to the first, indifferent and undetermined in himself to act or not to act, and besides that, incapable—by the forces of nature alone, which are entirely weakened by sin—of producing any supernatural and meritorious act for salvation.

3. The action and the power to perform it, in the order of grace just as in the order of nature, are two distinct realities: the first is more noble and more perfect than the second.

[1]On these principles—which hold true in every state—the Thomists recognize that, both in the state of innocence and in the state of corrupted nature, there is a necessity for two distinct helps or graces in the order of salvation: one less perfect and less strong, which gives only the power and

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on Ephesians, chapter 3, lecture 1, on the Apostle's words: "whose minister I am according to the gift of the grace of God…"

makes man capable of a supernatural act (this one is called sufficient grace); the other stronger and more perfect, which determines the power and gives the action itself (this one is called efficacious grace). In short, that it never happens that the power given by sufficient grace actually operates or produces its principal and final effect without the help of efficacious grace. Otherwise, God would cease to be the first cause and the immediate cause of the action; and the creature—which, despite its power and its elevation, remains always indifferent—would give itself its own determination (which it does not have), and would become the first cause of its own salvation and justice in vessels of wrath, as we will explain more fully for propositions 12 and 13. Whoever wills an end also wills the necessary means to attain it, and wills them in the same way that he wills the end. Therefore, since God sincerely wills to save all men—even if not efficaciously—He must at least offer to all sufficient helps with which they can save themselves. So, if they do not save themselves, it is not because they cannot, but because they do not want to. By sinning voluntarily, they place an obstacle in the way of the efficacious grace that would have given them the will to do so. On the other hand, since God

wills efficaciously to save some, He must give to those some efficacious helps by which they are in fact saved. [2] [3][4]

GRATUITOUSNESS OF GRACE

Both wills in God regarding the salvation of men are a pure effect of His infinite mercy, completely independent of any foreknowledge of our merits. Consequently, the graces that result from them are also purely gratuitous. Moreover, man has nothing in himself that gives him any right to grace, nor anything that could oblige God to grant it to him. Everything man has from himself is either sin or purely human merit; the one makes him unworthy of grace, while the other—being of an inferior order to grace—is not sufficiently proportioned to it to serve as merit or even as a preparation for it.

EFFICACY OF GRACE

Assuming what we said earlier—that God, through grace, is the first and immediate cause of our salvation and of all our meritorious and supernatural actions, while man is only the secondary cause subordinated to the first,

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[2] Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 109, a. 1

[3] Ibid., a. 2.

[4] I-II, q. 137, a. 4 | III Contra Gentiles, cap. 88, etc. | St. Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on Hebrews, chapter 12, lecture 3 | I Sent. Dist. 46, Q. 1, Art. 1 | See also III contra Gentiles, chapter 159 | I Sent. 40, Q. 4, Art. 2; II-II, q. 137, Art. 4 |

always indifferent and undetermined in himself itself: it necessarily follows that this grace does not become efficacious, or does not draw its efficacy, from the consent of the free will—even though, according to these principles, that consent, however one considers it (whether at the moment it is given or foreseen in the future under certain congruent circumstances), must always be the effect and never the cause of this efficacy. And it is true to say that man consents because grace is efficacious, and not that grace is efficacious because man consents.

Without this, God—as we have already noted—would cease to be the first and immediate cause of this consent and consequently of salvation; the creature would usurp this right and give itself a determination for the good that it does not possess.

This efficacy is therefore drawn entirely from the absolute will of God: this grace draws all its force and efficacy from the whole power of God and from the sovereign dominion He has over all created beings. And this is what we mean when we speak in this way: ‘grace efficacious by itself.’

PERFECT LIBERTY UNDER EFFICACIOUS GRACE BY ITSELF

Under this whole divine power—which is no less universal than it is efficacious, extending even to the smallest beings and the smallest differences of being—the motion or efficacious grace that does not fail gives us not only the action, but also the manner in which it must be done, in conformity with the nature of the secondary cause. If it is a necessary cause that acts necessarily, it makes it act necessarily; if it is a free cause, it makes it act freely. And by merely removing the inaction or passive indifference, it leaves the creature with full active indifference—that is to say, a true and complete power not to act, to resist, to undo the contrary, without in any way lessening the power that remains to the will when it determines itself: power over the rest that remains, as the School speaks, antecedent and in the divided sense, as we will explain for proposition 10. God moves all things according to their mode: and therefore divine motion is participated in some with necessity, in rational creatures with liberty, because rational power has itself toward opposites. And therefore God moves the human mind to the good that it can resist this motion. [5]

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[5] Liber Primus Perhieron, Lect. 14
[6] St Thomas Aquinas, Quodlibet 1, Art. 7

THE SYSTEM OF JANSENIUS

1. The source of Jansenius's error, and what his entire system revolves around, is the difference he falsely imagined between the state of innocence and the state of corrupted nature. According to him, this consists in the fact that in the state of innocence, there were only sufficient graces submitted to Adam's will; and that in the state of corrupted nature, there are only efficacious graces that sovereignly dominate the will of man. This is what he teaches and what he assumes as incontestable throughout his work, especially in Volume 2 On The Grace of Adam and The Angels (chapter 14), and in Volume 3 On The Grace of The Savior. [7]

2. From this falsely assumed principle, he recognizes no other cause for the necessity of efficacious grace in the present state except the infirmity of wounded, weakened, and corrupted nature by sin.

3. According to him, this grace is nothing other than a spiritual delight, or an indeliberate feeling of heavenly pleasure that carries us toward the good—just as cupidity is a feeling of earthly pleasure that carries us toward evil. And so on, diametrically opposing philosophical liberty or the indifference of liberty… [He argues that perfect celestial delight given to the will destroys philosophical indifference, etc.]

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[7] On the Grace of the Savior Vol 3, Book 2, Ch. 1-4

4. If the attraction of grace is superior in force and degree to that of cupidity, grace becomes victorious and necessarily draws us to the good. If, on the contrary, the attraction of cupidity is superior, it draws us in the same necessary way to evil—because the will is always necessitated to follow the attraction of the greater pleasure. And this victorious attraction—whether of grace or of cupidity—causes action, even though it is diametrically opposed to the indifference of acting or not acting. These are the terms of Jansenius.

5. This does not prevent him from adding, however, that man remains free in the choice of good or evil, and that in this he neither merits nor demerits, because this indifference to act or not to act—according to him—is not essential to liberty, which is nothing other than the will itself; the will is always free as long as it wills, so that it subsists with necessity [8]…and that there is only violence that forces it contrary.

6. From the same erroneous principle, he claims that the antecedent will in God to save all men—which he calls the will of primeval goodness—was only for the state of innocence, and not for the state of corrupted nature, for which there is now only a consequent will not for the state of corrupted nature, for which there is now only a consequent will—which he calls the second will or the will of justice. [9]

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[8] Ibid, Ch. 9, Ch. 14

[9] On the Grace of The Savior, Book 3, Chapter 20"He endeavors to prove this interpretation of the Apostle: 'God wills all men to be saved, etc.' He says it cannot be understood except in

7. From this he further concludes that, by virtue of this [antecedent] will, Adam had received sufficient graces; but at present it [sufficient grace] is sterile with regard to men, that it no longer results in any grace: not even the death of Jesus Christ for all men. [10]

8. It is not that Jansenius did not recognize, in the state of corrupted nature, some small graces that excite man to the good and inspire in him imperfect desires to which he can resist. But according to Jansenius and within his system, these graces are not—and cannot be—sufficient in any way. Here is how. Sometimes people call "sufficient grace" that which suffices in every respect, in such a way that, from God's side, nothing more is lacking for actual action; it fails in nothing additional on God's part. This is how Jansenius conceived sufficient grace, and he recognizes no other that truly deserves the name. Yet he claims—as we have already seen—that this kind of grace is uniquely proper to unfallen and intact nature; therefore, the small graces he admits in corrupted nature are not—and cannot be—sufficient according to him. People also call "sufficient grace" that which suffices in its own kind—that is, which gives a sufficient power to act, but beyond which

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three ways: 1) That this word 'all' is taken accommodatively for all who are saved. 2) That it is received for all kinds of individuals.
3) That it is understood as God willing all men to be saved, because He makes holy men will and obtain the salvation of all. (See the following chapter.)"

[10] Ibid, Ch. 29 After sins have now been considered as indulgences by men: the antecedent will is in mere mental approbation, and therefore a mere velleity, nothing of grace is constant, nothing can be considered. (See the following chapter and the last.) No mode of the first will…

another is still needed for actual action. This is how the Thomists understand sufficient grace; and this notion of sufficient grace cannot apply to Jansenius's small graces any more than the first one can.

SYSTEM OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS [MOLINISTS]

Molina, toward the end of the 16th century, taught that there are only sufficient graces in themselves, submitted to the disposition of free will; and that they only become efficacious insofar as the will of man makes them so by its consent. He claimed that God often grants to many of those who do not convert stronger and more abundant graces than those He gives to those who do convert. [11] This new doctrine initially shocked almost all minds: it was combated and reproved—even by celebrated Jesuits—as contrary to the Holy Scriptures, to the principles of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, to the dogma of predestination. [12] The Religious of St. Dominic (The Dominicans) accused it before Pope Clement VIII and Pope Paul V of renewing the errors of the Pelagians or semi-Pelagians; and they supported their accusation in the famous disputes *De Auxiliis*, with such solidity that Paul V finally resolved to condemn Molina's opinions; he even had the Bull drafted, which to this day

[11] Molina, Disp. 38, Ad 1. 14, § Antequam
[12] Saint Robert Bellarmine, On Grace and Free Will Book 1, Ch. 12

lacks only publication to have the force of law. [13] The Society [of Jesus], which had taken up Molina's defense too ardently, feared the blow and became even more attentive because of the condemnation that the Universities of Louvain and Douai had recently brought against the doctrine of Lessius and Hamelius—which was almost the same as Molina's. They abandoned in some measure the system of this latter and imposed it as law on their subjects to hold instead to the doctrine of congruent grace taught by Suarez. It was the Reverend Father General Aquaviva who, after mature deliberation with the Assistants and their advice, issued this Ordinance, which he then sent to the whole Society with Circular Letters on December 14, 1613—and which was confirmed in 1613.

In this system, the Jesuits recognize two graces: one incongruent, so called because it is not sufficiently proportioned to the temperament, inclination, passion, habit, times, place, and other circumstances in which the person who receives it finds himself, so that it cannot obtain consent; this is why it can only be sufficient. The other grace is called congruent because it is proportioned to the temperament, inclination, and other circumstances of the person who receives it—and in which God, by His eternal prescience, or (as it is said) middle knowledge, has foreseen that it would infallibly have its effect.

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[13] Hyacinthus Serry, Book 4, History of the Congregations De Auxiliis, Chapter 19 & In the Appendix §15

In this way, this congruent grace is always efficacious; otherwise it would not be congruent, and God would be mistaken in His prescience. Its efficacy comes not from its own forces, or from the omnipotence of God as the Thomists maintain, but from the congruence, or (as others say) from divine prescience. And although in its physical being it has nothing more on God's side than the sufficient grace that is not congruent; nevertheless, it has something more in the quality of moral being: in that God, by a special goodness, gives it to one person in circumstances where He knows with certainty that he will use it well—whereas He could give it otherwise—and He actually gives it to others in circumstances where He foresees they will misuse it. From this it follows that this congruent grace, according to its authors, is a greater favor and a greater benefit than non-congruent grace; and it is distinguished from it not only in the second act and by the creature's consent, but also in the first act and on God's side: always morally and in reason of a greater benefit contained in the efficacious grace than in the sufficient, and in the first act, as the Decree of Acquaviva says it is contained; the Ordinances of the seventh and ninth Congregations say the same thing. [14] The Jesuits, by this tempering, have claimed to sufficiently distinguish

[14] From the Decree of Claudio Acquaviva, Superior General of the Society of Jesus "With regard to this and etc… We have decreed and ordered… that in teaching divine efficacious grace, our men should not teach in the future that efficacy itself is contained in grace… but that they should teach that efficacy is said of grace which has the effect itself, and that sufficient grace is not efficacious…"

themselves from Molina's opinion and from the errors of the semi-Pelagians that are reproached to them. I do not examine here whether this distinction is well-founded; I know that many do not agree with it in truth; but my intention is not at present to enter into dispute on this subject, still less to set myself up as a censor. I merely suppose this system as adopted by the Society, and it suffices for my design to have given you an idea of it, as I have done with that of the Thomists and that of Jansenius: for beyond that I want to show you two things.

The First: an absolute difference between our sentiments and the condemned propositions of Father Quesnel. The second: that if the Jesuits and their partisans refuse to recognize this difference, in order to make some appearances of rapport that one might imagine between these propositions and certain terms used in our schools, they must themselves condemn their own doctrine; since according to their system of congruent grace, they speak and As for the sense of the propositions in the Bull, I would willingly grant to Father Quesnel what he himself demands in his Protestation, page 79: "It is not a question," he says, "of what I may have had in mind, but of what is expressed in my Reflections." No, I will not quibble with Father Quesnel over his personal intention—what he thought or may have thought when he wrote these propositions; it belongs only to God to search hearts and judge the

interior. But I will scrupulously limit myself to the sense that the propositions themselves present, considered in relation to one another and in relation to the external circumstances. For, just as to discover the natural sense of a book, it is not enough to consider a single chapter separated from the body of the work; one must pay attention to what precedes and what follows, to the end that the author proposes in his work, to the arguments he combats, to the circumstances of times and places in which he writes. In the same way, to know the natural and condemned sense of one proposition, which is proposed to us along with several others in the same Bull, it is not enough to consider it alone in itself; one must examine it relatively to the other propositions that treat the same matter—if they are found there—and in relation to the circumstances of the author.

For example, without going further from our subject, Father Quesnel says in proposition 46: "That cupidity or charity makes the use of free will good or bad." If I considered this proposition bad in itself, separated from the others, I would doubt whether it means that charity, when it makes us act, makes the use of free will good (which would be true), or that it alone makes the use of free will good, in such a way that without it it is always bad (which would be false). But if I come to consider the others and the Savior. Otherwise, it would follow that Jansenius recognizes in God, for the state of

corrupted nature, a sincere antecedent will for the salvation of men, from which would result these inefficacious graces of salvation; this is, as we have remarked, what he absolutely denies. Therefore, one cannot say that these small graces, which he admits, give the sufficient power to do good, to accomplish the Law, to convert, and to be saved; nor consequently that they are sufficient in the sense of the Thomists, that they are finally sufficient in the sense of the Thomists.

But finally, what need is there to search by reasoning in Jansenius what he himself has admitted to us in such clear terms, and what he supposes throughout his entire work, as the foundation of his whole system? It is, as we have said, in Volume 3 on the grace of Adam, chapter 14, and in Volume 3 on the grace of the Savior, Book 2, chapters 1, 2, 3, & 4, where he recognizes no sufficient graces except for the state of innocence. And it is from this false principle that he claims to prove in chapter 25 of the same book that there is no longer any grace that is not efficacious; and in the same Book 3, chapter 3, he regards the sufficient grace in the sense of the Thomists as an absurdity and as a monster that cannot serve except to multiply sins and to damn men more easily and more rigorously. [15] From all this system of Jansenius naturally result the five famous propositions that are justly attributed to him.

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[15] Cornelius Jansen, Book III on the Grace of The Savior, Ch. 3

The first: That there are precepts that are impossible for the just who will and who try to observe them according to the powers they have present, and that grace, which would make them possible, is lacking to them. Because it is only efficacious grace that makes the observance of these precepts possible; and it is certainly lacking to them when they transgress; otherwise they would observe them.

The second: That in the state of corrupted nature, one never resists interior grace. Because in this state, there are only efficacious graces that necessarily draw the will to the good.

The third: That to merit or demerit in the state of corrupted nature, it is not necessary to be exempt from necessity.

The fourth: That the semi-Pelagians were heretics in that they held that one can resist interior grace. Because there are only efficacious graces that necessarily draw the will to the good.

The fifth: That the semi-Pelagians were heretics in that they held that one can resist interior grace without violence. Because necessity is not contrary to liberty.

Other propositions that have rapport to these, and that they say there are only two loves from which all our wills and all our actions arise: the love of God

and the love of ourselves; the love of God and the love of ourselves, prop. 44: that the love of God does not reign more in the heart of the sinner, it is necessary that carnal cupidity reign and corrupt all our actions, prop. 45: that without love of God there is only hypocrisy or false justice, prop. 47: that there is no good work without the love of God, prop. 49. When, I say, I read all that in the propositions that follow and that precede the one I have just reported; and when furthermore I reflect that it is advanced by an Author suspected of Baianism: immediately my doubt is lifted, and I easily understand that (whatever Father Quesnel may have thought when writing it) the true and natural sense of this proposition is that there is only charity that makes the use of our free will good, in such a way that everything done without it is evil; or at least that it favors this error, which is justly suspected and therefore very condemnable.

For, to say it again in passing, it is not always necessary for a proposition to be absolutely false, or evil, or erroneous, or heretical, in order to be legitimately condemned; it suffices that, in the rigor of its terms, it becomes evil, or suspect, or dangerous, and that what is obscure in one is clarified by the other. As for the sense of the propositions in the Bull, I would willingly grant to Father Quesnel what he himself demands in his Protestation, page 79: “It is not a question,” he says, “of what I may have had in mind, but

of what is expressed in my Reflections." No, I will not quibble with Father Quesnel over his personal intention—what he thought or may have thought when he wrote these propositions; it belongs only to God to search hearts and judge the interior. But I will scrupulously limit myself to the sense that the propositions themselves present, considered in relation to one another and in relation to the external circumstances.

For, just as to discover the natural sense of a book, it is not enough to consider a single chapter separated from the body of the work; one must pay attention to what precedes and what follows, to the end that the author proposes in his work, to the arguments he combats, to the circumstances of times and places in which he writes. In the same way, to know the natural and condemned sense of one proposition, which is proposed to us along with several others in the same Bull, it is not enough to consider it alone in itself; one must examine it relatively to the other propositions that treat the same matter—if they are found there—and in relation to the circumstances of the author. The practice of the Church in all times gives us the most convincing testimony.

From these principles thus established, and since I do not believe that anyone should contest them with me, I conclude that Father Quesnel, having long been suspected of the errors of Baius and Jansenius, and even more so of

favoring them openly in several places in his book, and since those who defend him most ardently do the same, I conclude, I say, that a proposition advanced by this Author in these circumstances can be legitimately censurable in his mouth under one of the qualifications of the Bull, even if it were not formally so in Scripture or in the Fathers, if it were found there, or in other Catholic theologians whose faith and doctrine are beyond all suspicion. It is in this way that the Church condemned in the mouth of the Nestorians this proposition: "The Virgin is Mother of Jesus Christ"—which is nevertheless very orthodox in the mouth of Catholics today. It is also in this way that in the Council of Antioch she reproved the famous word Homoousios against Paul of Samosata, which she then authorized in the Council of Nicaea against Arius. This expression of the Son of God, "my Father is greater than I," said the learned Melchior Cano, was only condemned in the mouth of the Arians because it contained the poison of their heresy. Nor could they support it in the contrary and Catholic sense of a Holy Father where I would find it. Nevertheless, as, according to Saint Thomas, we must avoid even words that would make us have common expressions with heretics, for fear that we may seem to favor them, "with heretics we ought not to have common names, nor favor their error in any way" [16]. I must not, in the present circumstances, make use of these expressions, at least to those who read them, or who hear them,

[16] Summa Theologica III, Q. 16, Art. 8

and who do not easily understand the Catholic sense that I give them, or that I add some terms or other circumstances; I do not insist.

All this supposed, Monsieur, that I beg you to recall from time to time, let us see in this what you have asked me & what I have promised you, the difference between our sentiments and the condemned propositions of Father Quesnel.

TABLE OF CONDEMNED PROPOSITIONS OF FR. QUESNEL

ERROR I. A soul that has lost God and His grace is left only with sin and its consequences: proud poverty, wretched indigence, and total general impotence for any good work, prayer, or effort. (Luke 16:3)

ERROR II. Without love (charity) of God, there is only hypocrisy or false justice. There is no good work without the love of God.

ERROR III. Cupidity or charity makes the use of free will good or bad. (Proposition 46)

ERROR IV. In the state of corrupted nature, there are only efficacious graces;

one never resists interior grace.

ERROR V. To merit or demerit in fallen nature, one does not need to be free from necessity.

ERROR VI. Commandments are impossible for the just who will & try to observe them with present powers; sufficient grace is lacking.

ERROR VII. The Old Law left man in weakness & impotence to accomplish the Law. The New Law alone gives grace (Jesus Christ) to do what God commands.

ERROR VIII. We belong to the New Alliance only insofar as we have part in this new grace (efficacious grace) that operates in us what God commands.

ERROR IX. The sovereign grace with which one never renounces Jesus Christ is the efficacious grace of Jesus Christ. Jansenius said it before Quesnel, that without this grace one cannot confess Him.

ERROR X. Grace is a gift, a benefit of the All-Powerful and of the Goodness of God toward the just.

ERROR XI. When God wants to save a soul in every time, in every place, the undoubtable effect follows from the will of God: Mark 2:11.

ERROR XII. When God wants to save a soul and touches it with the interior hand of His grace, no human will resists Him. (Luke 5:13)

SENTIMENTS OF THE THOMIST SCHOOL

I. A soul that loses charity still ordinarily retains faith, hope, moral virtues, reason, and free will (though weakened by sin). It retains a real power—through sufficient actual grace (not refused)—to perform some natural/moral good that is useful toward salvation. [17][18]

II. Moral virtues can exist and be acquired without charity (e.g., acquired virtues ordered to natural ends). Sufficient grace gives a true power to do

[17] Summa Theologica I-II, Q. 65, Art. 4
[18] Ibid, II-II Q. 6, Art, 3 & Q. 18, Art. 4, Repl. 1

natural/moral good useful for salvation, even if it is not always used perfectly. Charity is required for supernatural merit, but not for all moral good.

III. Charity makes acts meritorious/supernatural, but sufficient grace gives a real power to use free will for moral/natural good even without charity. Free will retains indifference and power to act or resist (in the divided sense).

IV. In fallen nature, sufficient grace is offered to all, and man can resist it. Efficacious grace is given to some and infallibly moves the will without destroying liberty (intrinsic premotion).

V. Liberty is essential for merit/demerit; necessity (violence) destroys it. Efficacious grace moves the will infallibly but leaves active indifference/power not to act.

VI. Sufficient grace gives real power to obey commandments (even if efficacious grace is needed for actual fulfillment). It is not in vain to command what one can do with sufficient grace.

VII. God gives sufficient grace so that commandments are truly possible (real

power to obey). The New Law gives efficacious grace that operates what God commands, but sufficient grace already gives the power (not in vain to command).

VIII. We belong to the New Alliance by having part in efficacious grace (which operates what God commands) and by God giving us the power (via sufficient grace) to do what is commanded.

IX. We say, against both, that without it one can truly confess Him, although it never happens that one confesses Him.

X. Grace is an operation of the hand of the All-Powerful, of God who can do all things.

XI. St. Thomas, as we have already said in the first System and with him all the Disciples, distinguish in God two wills, one antecedent, the other consequent; [these are the terms of the School.] God, they say, considering men, even after Adam's sin, made in His image, created for His glory, and capable of possessing Him, loving them, cherishing them, wants to save all;

and this is the antecedent will; in virtue of which He sent His Son only-begotten to the law to redeem all the slaves of sin.

XII. On the other hand, considering the whole human nature infected by sin, rebellious to His orders, enemy of His glory, subject to the default and inconstancy by the proper weight of its nothingness: to preserve the rights of His nothingness, to omit nothing of the duties of His justice, to leave nothing of the duties of His justice.

However far from salvation an obstinate sinner may be, when Jesus Christ makes Himself seen to him by the salutary light of His grace, he must surrender, run to Him, humble himself, and adore his Savior. (Mark 5:6 & 7.) by the sufficient graces that are given to us in virtue of the present merits of Jesus Christ, by faith and hope, by the Sacraments He has instituted, and above all by that of Baptism, which is conferred on us, says St. Thomas, so that we may be incorporated into Him and made His mystical members. It is in this way that we must necessarily speak with St. Thomas in order to explain the doctrine of the Church. On the one hand, Scripture and the Fathers tell us that no one can resist the absolute will of God: “There is no one who can resist

His will."[19] That the motion of efficacious grace is all-powerful, infallible, unchangeable: these are the terms of St. Augustine and St. Thomas. On the other side, it is a matter of faith that we are free in the choice of good and evil, and that we can resist the absolute will of God and the motion of efficacious grace itself; the holy Council of Trent has expressly determined this. [20] We can therefore resist God, and we cannot resist God. That is why it is said that man, under its dominion, receives grace and keeps his liberty; he can consent or resist, he can prevent or delay, without this contradicting the infallibility of the effect. How can this be? We can do so in the divided sense, we cannot do so in the composite sense. Furthermore, according to the doctrine of the whole Church, God knows with certainty and infallibly whether I will convert or not. God can not predestine someone to be predestined, in the composite sense this is false, in the divided sense it is true; and therefore all those propositions that imply the composite sense are simply false.[21] [22] [23] He never does it, because this grace is efficacious and there would be this contradiction that it would be efficacious and not efficacious, that the action would happen and would not happen. He can do it not with a power of consequence and in the composite sense, as the School speaks, but with an antecedent power and in the divided

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[19] Romans 9:19
[20] Council of Trent, Session 6, Canon 4
[21] De Veritate Q. 24, Art. 1 | Ibid Q. 23, Art. 5
[22] De Potentia, Q. 23, Art. 1
[23] Contra Gentiles I, Ch. 67

sense. That is to say that under the efficacious grace to convert, he retains a true power not to convert, not however by allying non-conversion with the efficacious grace of conversion; for that is as contradictory as allying conversion with non-conversion since at the same time that the grace is efficacious, it has its effect and conversion takes place. Just as a man who stands freely upright can sit down; not in the composite sense, as if he could ally in the same time these two opposite acts sitting and standing upright, but in the divided sense: that is to say that, while he is standing, he has a true power to sit down: allying the power to sit down with the action of standing upright, which is the divided sense, because it divides the action from another opposite action: and not allying the action of sitting down with that of standing upright, which is the composite sense. [24] that I will convert, then my conversion is certain and infallible, and I cannot not convert with an efficacious power reduced to the act; otherwise the knowledge of God would be fallible and uncertain. Despite this, however, I am free and I can not convert. Therefore once again: I can and I cannot convert; I can in the divided sense, I cannot in the composite sense.

Finally, the Congruists themselves in particular must speak in this strong way, if they want to remain faithful to their principles. A man who has congruent

[24] De Veritate, Q. 6, Art. 4, Repl. 9

grace to convert can, in the divided sense, not convert—that is to say that under this grace he keeps his liberty and the power not to convert. But he cannot do so in the composite sense—that is to say that he cannot ally, and will never ally, his obstinacy or non-conversion with the congruent grace to convert. Otherwise this congruent grace to convert would not be congruent, since it would not be congruent insofar as it is so proportioned to the circumstances of the one who receives it that he obtains infallibly his consent; and if he did not obtain it, it would be defective in some congruence or some proportion with the will that ought to consent. Otherwise, I say, it would follow that God, who has foreseen with certainty that in consequence of this congruence the sinner would convert, God would be deceived in his prescience, of the same in leaving others in the mass of corruption and the reprobate, in order to manifest His justice in the vessels of wrath, and because the order and nature of defective things require of His Providence that while she conducts happily some to their end, she permits that others fall and stray. And this is the consequent will. It is in this way that a just and pious Prince (this is the example of St. Thomas) who has in his prisons a criminal, wants him to live, while he does not consider him simply as a man or as a father of a family: but when he considers him as guilty of the crime of lèse-majesté, he wants him to die to satisfy justice. Abraham, not envisaging in Isaac anything

but his blood, moved by a very sincere love of a father, ardently desired that he live; but remembering that God had ordered him the death, he also wants it so as not to disobey his Sovereign Master. The Holy Virgin, considering her Son Jesus as the most lovable among all the children of men, wants life for Him and wants for Him the most sincere and tender of all affections; but reflecting that He is arrested in the eternal decrees that He must die, because He has given Himself up to the caution of sinners, she also wants it, in order to conform to the orders of her God. The first of these wills is called antecedent, because it envisages the thing in its first point of view, separated from the circumstances that accompany it in execution: the second is called consequent for the opposite reason. The first is conditional, because it does not want the thing except on condition that it does not prevent a greater good: the second is absolute and without condition. This one is efficacious, and produces in time efficacious means; that one is inefficacious, and gives only sufficient means. She is nevertheless also sincere and truly in God with regard to the salvation of all men, as she is in this pious Prince with regard to the life of his subject, in Abraham for the life of Isaac, in Mary for the life of Jesus.[25]

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[25] Summa Theologica I, Q. 19, Art. 6, Ad Primum
[26] See Also: De Veritate, Q. 23, Art. 1

CONTINUED ERRORS OF FATHER QUESNEL

ERROR XIII. This principle is supposed: although it is true to speak of the consequent will of God in particular, that it always has its indubitable effect, that no human will resists it, etc. (And it is of this will that we understand several passages of Scripture and the Fathers, when they say that nothing resists the will of God.) One cannot, however, hold the same language of the will of God in general and without any exception; because in Him there is an antecedent will to save all men, which, although sincere and true, is nevertheless inefficacious, and that similar expressions advanced by Father Quesnel in the circumstances in which he finds himself favor at least the error of Jansenius, who, not having wanted to recognize in God this will to save all men after Adam's sin, has denied, in consequence of this principle, both sufficient grace in the present state, and the death of Jesus Christ for all. See his System n. 6 & 7.

ERROR XIV. 2. 3. 4. 9. 11. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. I bring together all these propositions, because they all concur to give us the idea of a single grace always efficacious, without recognizing any other.

ERROR XV. The grace of Jesus Christ is a sovereign grace, etc. Grace is not another thing than the will of God all-powerful, etc.

ERROR XVI. Grace is not another thing than the all-powerful will of God, who commands and does all that He commands. Mark 2:11.

ERROR XVII. When God accompanies His commandment and His exterior word with the unction of His spirit and the interior force of His grace, it operates in the heart the obedience that it demands. Luke 9:60. 16. There is no charm that does not yield.

THE SENTIMENTS OF THE THOMIST SCHOOL

XII. 2. The grace of Jesus Christ is the principle of efficacious grace, etc. 3. In vain you command us, Lord, etc. 4. Yes, Lord, everything is possible, etc.

XIII. This principle is supposed: although it is true to say of the consequent will of God in particular that it always has its indubitable effect, that no human will resists it, etc. (And it is of this will that we understand several

passages of Scripture and the Fathers, when they say that nothing resists the will of God.) One cannot, however, hold the same language of the will of God in general and without any exception; because in Him there is an antecedent will to save all men, which, although sincere and true, is nevertheless inefficacious, and that similar expressions advanced by Father Quesnel in the circumstances in which he finds himself favor at least the error of Jansenius, who, not having wanted to recognize in God this will to save all men after Adam's sin, has denied, in consequence of this principle, both sufficient grace in the present state, and the death of Jesus Christ for all. See his System n. 6 & 7. The most specious pretext that the Anti-Constitutionalists use to reject the Bull, and the Jesuits or their partisans to insult us: but let us try to take this false pretext away from them, and if it is possible, cure them of their prejudices.

To answer this objection therefore with more order, and to make its falsity better seen: **I remark first that it says two things:** the one, that these propositions in their proper and natural sense express only efficacious grace by itself, insofar as distinguished from another species of grace that is only sufficient and inefficacious. For according to the rules of the most common and the most sound Philosophy (let it not displease the Author of the Art of

Thinking) an indefinite proposition in matters of dogma is worth a universal one: as when I say, sin is a transgression of the law, the sinner is worthy of punishment, virtue is lovable, vice is odious; this is understood generally, that every sin is a transgression of the law, that every sinner is worthy of punishment, that every virtue is lovable, every vice odious. Thus, when Quesnel says, interior grace, the grace of God, the grace of Jesus Christ etc. is always efficacious, one never resists it, it always bears its fruit, it operates the obedience that it demands etc., this must be understood in the same general way of every grace that is truly interior grace, grace of God, grace of Jesus Christ etc. such as are the sufficient graces of the Thomists. It is therefore false that the proper and natural sense of these propositions expresses only efficacious grace in particular, insofar as distinguished from the simply sufficient grace of the Thomists. Besides, if one reads without prejudice all these propositions as they are presented to us, if one brings them together, if one examines them respectively among themselves, and in relation to the circumstances of the Author (for it is thus, as I have said, that one must judge them) if one wants to act in good faith, one will ingenuously avow that they speak generally of all interior grace, that they recognize in it only efficacious graces, and in no way inefficacious sufficient ones.

The second proposition of Jansenius: In the state of fallen nature, one never resists interior grace:

This proposition, I say, is it more universal in its terms than these? When God wants to save the soul, in every time and in every place, the indubitable effect follows from the will of a God. When God wants to save a soul and touches it with the interior hand of His grace, no human will resists Him. There is no charm that does not yield to those of grace. The seed of the word that the hand of God sows always bears its fruit etc. These expressions are certainly no less strong, no less general than those of Jansenius' proposition. This one says that one never resists grace: those say that one always cooperates with it, in every time, in every place, that no human will resists it, that there is no charm that does not yield to those of grace. All are equivalent and the same thing on both sides. Now the proposition of Jansenius has always been understood in a general sense of all interior grace, and it is only in this sense that it is condemned: Why then, since those of Father Quesnel are conceived in equivalent terms, would one today want to give them a more restricted and more favorable sense? Quesnel, it is said, has admitted graces to which one resists; Jansenius has admitted them also; and he is nevertheless condemned as not recognizing only efficacious ones and no sufficient ones. How is that? I

have already said it, Monsieur, and you must not forget it. It is that according to the system of Jansenius on the difference of the two states, on the force of grace relative to concupiscence, on the defect of the will in God for the salvation of all men after Adam's sin; these little graces that he recognizes always have all the effect they can have and for which they are given, and they give the man in no way a true and sufficient power for a further effect: [see his System n. 8.] consequently it is always true to say that Jansenius recognizes only efficacious graces and no sufficient ones. Why therefore once again would one not carry the same judgment on Father Quesnel, despite the little graces to which one resists, he who copies so closely the system of Jansenius, who is so legitimately suspected of it, and who in propositions 2. 3. 4. & 9. says in such clear terms that without efficacious grace one can do nothing, consequently that it alone is sufficient? At least one cannot reasonably deny that these propositions in the mouth of the speaker, whether captious, or rash, or scandalous, or ill-sounding, whether favoring the error of Jansenius, and consequently condemnable as such. It is what almost all the Bishops, even those most prejudiced in his favor, recognize very highly.

I pass to the second falsity of the objection, namely, that it is in the sense of efficacious grace by itself, insofar as distinguished from simply sufficient

grace, that is to say in the Thomistic sense of grace, that these propositions are condemned. Besides the advantage that I can already draw from what I have just said, and that I will take up again in a moment, I produce once more, to put this falsity in all its evidence, two decisive arguments that I have already touched on elsewhere, and that I will support here with an incontestable and unreplyable fact.

I. The Sovereign Pontiff in the Bull Unigenitus etc. declares in formal terms that he condemns some of the propositions of Quesnel, insofar as they renew manifestly the errors of the five propositions of Jansenius. And various heresies, especially those which are contained in the famous propositions of Jansen are clearly innovative. Among the propositions of Quesnel, those that one can, and that one must accuse of renewing the errors of the five propositions, are without doubt those that treat grace, which is almost the unique matter of Jansenism. Now all the Catholic world agrees that the error of Jansenius' propositions on grace is to recognize only efficacious graces and to reject the sufficient ones: therefore the Bull Unigenitus condemns these propositions of Quesnel only in the sense of a single grace always efficacious, and not in the sense of efficacious grace by itself insofar as distinguished from a sufficient grace.

II. The same Sovereign Pontiff in his latest Apostolic Letters Pastoralis Officii etc. complains bitterly of those who claim, or even who suspect, that the sentiments of the Catholic Schools are condemned by the Constitution Unigenitus etc. For if they were not blinded by their own malice, he continues, and if they loved the light more than the darkness, they should not ignore that these sentiments and this doctrine, which they confuse with the errors that we have condemned, are taught and freely defended, publicly and under our eyes, in the Catholic Schools, even since our Constitution was issued, consequently that it does not condemn them at all. For unless their malice blinded them and they should diligently be more ignorant of darkness than of light, those opinions and doctrines which they confuse with errors condemned by us were openly and freely taught and defended in Catholic schools, even after the Constitution mentioned by Us was issued, under Our eyes, and therefore they were not at all proscribed by it.

Now among all the Catholic Schools, I can say without vanity that St. Thomas holds the first rank, and it is even evident that the Sovereign Pontiff had principally in view in this Declaration, since these are the sentiments of this School on grace that the Quesnelists claim are condemned by the Constitution,

and that they confuse with their errors. Therefore once again the propositions of Quesnel are not condemned in the sense of Thomistic grace, but in the sense of Jansenist grace.

III. Let us add to this, as I promised you, a fact that must absolutely disarm our enemies. Here it is exactly as it was reported to me by those who were eyewitnesses, men of honor and worthy of faith.

On March 8, 1715, a thesis in theology was defended in Rome in the Church of the Minerva of the Order of the Friars Preachers, dedicated to Cardinal Fabroni, who attended it with a great number of prelates. A Religious Observantine opened the dispute and undertook to prove that the system of the Thomists concerning the efficacy of grace was no longer tenable, being condemned by the Constitution Unigenitus of which several propositions have much relation, or are absolutely similar to those the Thomists use to explain their sentiments on the matters of grace. The Respondent paid the argument, explaining with great solidity the system of the Thomists, and making it clearly and evidently seen how different and even opposed it is to that of the Jansenists, Quesnelists and other false disciples of St. Augustine; boldly adding that the Holy Father had never intended to give the slightest blow to

the doctrine of the SS. Doctors Augustine and Thomas, which the predecessors had always regarded as that of the Church on the matters of grace; that he had not condemned these propositions of Quesnel except in the sense of Jansenius anathematized long ago by the Church; and that finally the Cardinal Fabroni, who knew better than any other the intentions of His Holiness on this point, could bear witness to the truth he advanced. Whereupon, turning in the moment toward His Eminence to know what he thought of it: this Cardinal, applauding the Respondent's gesture and voice, testified in the presence of the whole assembly that he had spoken justly and that the Pope's intention had been truly that which he had just explained.

There, Monsieur, is a Cardinal who speaks publicly in the presence of the two parties, and a Cardinal above all who had more part than any other in the Constitution, who was in this the organ and the depository of the intentions of His Holiness, as everyone knows, and whose testimony in our favor cannot certainly be at all suspect. The fact besides is incontestable; one could produce as many witnesses as one wishes, for there were persons who composed this assembly, those of whom I hold this were of that number, and they are ready to affirm it by oath if needed. The argument is therefore without reply, and it remains constantly and evidently true that the Constitution prejudices in nothing the sentiments of our School, and that it condemns the propositions of

Quesnel only in the sense of Jansenius and in no way in that of the Thomists. This is what I had to prove to you. Moreover, remark, if you please, that these facts and these reasons that I set forth here in proof against the two falsities advanced are so much stronger because they mutually lend each other a hand and confirm one another. For if, as I said at the beginning, the proper and natural sense of the propositions is the sense of Jansenist grace, it is therefore in the sense of Jansenist grace that the Bull condemns them, since the Bull must condemn these propositions in their proper and natural sense. And if on the other side the Bull condemns these propositions in the sense of Jansenist grace, as I have just shown, the sense of Jansenist grace is therefore the natural sense of the propositions, since a Bull must condemn them in their proper and natural sense. Thus I see no way one can reply with solidity to proofs so convincing, and to serve me with apostolic expressions, one must be either blinded by one's own passion, or led by a gross and voluntary ignorance makes the will always, "*My word that goes out from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish whatever I please and will prosper in the things for which I sent it.*" Isa. 55:11. According to Scripture, I say, there is in God a will, and consequently a grace to which one never resists, and one cannot resist in any sense. The same thing is evident in St. Augustine and in St. Thomas. According to St. Ignatius, your glorious Founder, there is a kind

of grace, a divine virtue that moves us so strongly that not only does one not resist it, but rather it takes away from man the power to resist it. The first time will be when the divine will is so impelled by virtue that all doubt, nay even the soul's capacity for doubt, is removed, lest it follow such an impulse.[27] Has any Thomist ever spoken more strongly? According to you finally, there is a kind of grace (it is the congruent grace) that is always efficacious, that has charms to which one never resists, that always operates the obedience it demands, that always infallibly converts the sinner when it shines in his soul, in a word that always bears its fruit: for this is how you speak, and how you must speak in your system. Save therefore, my Reverend Fathers, save from the anathema of the Church the Oracles and the testament of her Spouse, save the doctrine of the Fathers and of your holy Founder, save yourselves, pull yourselves out of the embarrassment, after which we will think of ourselves; if perhaps what you can say in your favor is not at the same time our justification. You will undoubtedly have recourse to the relative sense to understand these propositions of an efficacious grace by itself; and we by the same right will also have recourse to understand them in the sense of a single grace always efficacious to the exclusion of every other simply sufficient one. There, I say, Monsieur, before employing other reasons, the one that I would first oppose to these Reverend Fathers, and to all the Thomists teach that there

[27] Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises Paragraph 175

is no grace, even the one they call sufficient, that does not always have some effect, consequently that every grace is efficacious? How then to save them from the case of the Bull, in whatever sense one takes it?

Let us speak justly, Monsieur, and let us not confuse anything; the matter is delicate. The Thomists teach, it is true, that there is no point of actual interior grace, even the one they call sufficient, that does not have some effect. They do not agree however, that one can simply say in their system that every grace is efficacious, that one never resists it, that it always bears its fruit, etc. They teach, I say, that there is no point of actual interior grace that does not have some effect. But can one make a crime out of it for them? Can one accuse them of heresy for that? Does natural reason alone, without stopping now at the authorities of Scripture and the Fathers, not convince us of it? For how could it do otherwise? And would it even be conceivable that God should enlighten my understanding interiorly, and that my understanding should not be enlightened? That He should warm my will, and that my will should not be warmed? If the sun enlightens the earth, is the earth not enlightened? If one pushes me, am I not pushed? If the fire burns me, am I not burned? If I move a stone, is the stone not moved? Does a cause ever act without effect? Does the action of the cause not begin the effect? And is the active movement of the Mover not the passive movement in the moved [28]: as St. Thomas says. Pardon

[28] Summa Theologica I-II, Q. 110, Art. 1

me these rather crude terms, and note that the comparisons I use here do not in fact involve liberty.

Moreover I ask: if before grace has operated any effect in my soul, I can sufficiently by myself with a complete and proximate interior power convert myself, or if I cannot? If I cannot, the grace of power to act is therefore useless, the Pelagians are no longer heretics, and it is in vain that the Council of Trent requires for the dispositions necessary to the conversion of the sinner faith, fear, hope, and a love of God begun. If I cannot: it is therefore necessary that this grace gives me the power, that it operates in me something that I did not have that it augments my forces, that it raises them to a superior order, such as is the act that I must produce, that it gives me the knowledge of our miseries, that it inspires in me hope, fear, this still imperfect love; and consequently that it is in all this efficacious: otherwise I would always remain, as I was before, weak, powerless and in no way proportioned to this act of supernatural conversion. And yet (note well Monsieur) this grace, which operates in me all these effects, is nothing more than sufficient for my conversion, since with it alone I can convert myself, and in effect, as I suppose, I do not convert myself. It is therefore with reason that we claim that actual grace, from the moment it is poured into my soul, is no longer merely

sufficient, and always operates some effect.

But nevertheless if this grace is directed to a more noble end to which it does not arrive, if it is given for an ulterior and principal effect that it does not operate: one cannot say of such a grace simply and without restriction, despite its first effect, that it is efficacious, that one never resists it, that it bears its fruit, that it operates the obedience it demands etc. Because, according to the Philosophers, the simple denomination of a thing is taken from that which is principal and most noble in it: or, as St. Thomas says, when an attribute can suit every subject, and yet it is not found except in one part; it does not denominate simply and absolutely this subject, but with restriction [29]: for example, being created is an attribute that can suit nature and person, if it is found in a subject whose nature or soul is created and not the person, such as in effect Jesus Christ, one must not say simply and absolutely of him that he is a creature; but only under this restriction, as to human nature.

Now we teach that the effect that these graces that remain simply sufficient operate, is neither the unique nor the principal one for which they are given and for which they are given. From their own proper nature they tend to one end and to one ulterior effect, since they dispose and give the power: and in the designs of God, according to His antecedent will, they are given with a

[29] Summa Theologica III, Q. 16, Art. 8

view to salvation, or to some meritorious action that they do not obtain. Therefore in our principles one cannot and one must not say simply and absolutely that these graces are efficacious, that they bear their fruit, that one does not resist them, that they operate the obedience they demand etc. But on the contrary, in speaking of them without restriction that they are efficacious as to the more or less proximate power, which is the less principal effect; one must say simply and without restriction that they are inefficacious, that one resists them, that they do not bear their fruit, that they do not operate the obedience they demand: because they do not obtain the principal effect that they claim and for which they give the power. I am going to make this even more sensible to you by some familiar examples, which will make you know that our language is neither forced, nor out of use, but on the contrary that it is very natural and even ordinary. I exhort a sinner to convert: I make him know the enormity of his crimes, and the peril in which he is of being eternally damned: I expose to him the goodness of God that he outrages with so much indignity, and that suffers it with so much patience: Enlightened by these lights pressed by these motives, his spirit opens his eyes to his misfortune, and his heart begins to be moved; he wants to convert, he forms the resolution. But a moment later, carried away by the violence of his long habits, he forgets himself and falls back into his first disorders. Will one say simply in this case

that my exhortations, in order to have had some first effects, are efficacious, that they have operated what I asked etc.? Will one not say on the contrary simply and without restriction that they are inefficacious, that I have lost my pains and worked in vain; because I have not obtained what I principally claimed, which was the conversion of this impious man?

1. I suppose that the necessary dispositions to make me know that our language is neither forced nor out of use, but on the contrary that it is very natural and even ordinary. I exhort a sinner to convert: I make him know the enormity of his crimes, and the peril in which he is of being eternally damned: I expose to him the goodness of God that he outrages with so much indignity, and that suffers it with so much patience: Enlightened by these lights, pressed by these motives, his spirit opens his eyes to his misfortune, and his heart begins to be moved; he wants to convert, he forms the resolution. But a moment later, carried away by the violence of his long habits, he forgets himself and falls back into his first disorders. Will one say simply in this case that my exhortations, in order to have had some first effects, are efficacious, that they have operated what I asked etc.? Will one not say on the contrary simply and without restriction that they are inefficacious, that I have lost my

pains and worked in vain; because I have not obtained what I principally claimed, which was the conversion of this impious man?

II. I suppose that the necessary and sufficient dispositions to be in a state to give alms to a poor man are the knowledge of his misery and of my obligation, and a movement of tenderness or compassion. God gives me by grace this knowledge and excites in my heart this movement: here I am sufficiently in a state to give alms: I do not give it however: I therefore render useless and unfruitful this grace that gave me the power; and although it is efficacious in something, one does not say simply that it is efficacious, but on the contrary that it is inefficacious, because it does not obtain its last and principal effect, which was to make me give the alms.

III. The Council of Trent requires for the dispositions necessary to the conversion of the sinner faith, hope, and a love of God begun: I suppose that this is sufficient to put him in a state to be able to convert himself; he does not convert himself however. One will not say then that these graces that had effectively inspired faith, hope, and this love begun are absolutely efficacious that they bear their fruit, that they operate what they demand. But one will say, and one commonly says, that they were sufficient, and that, not having

obtained the principal effect that God intended, which was the conversion of this sinner, they remain inefficacious. There, without doubt, Monsieur, is a language as Catholic as it is natural: it is that of the Thomists. But it cannot be that of Jansenius, nor of Quesnel; because, as we have already remarked several times, these little graces to which one resists, and which they recognize, operate always according to them all the effect they can have, and give the man in no way a sufficient power for an ulterior effect, consequently they are always absolutely efficacious, and not simply sufficient. See the 3rd System n. 8, and what I said above on these same propositions that I am treating at present. But finally the Jesuits and the Jansenists (for they unite here against us, and I do not doubt that they will not fail to chicane me on this subject) how is a sufficient grace, sufficient in the sense of the Thomists, since it is not sufficient, and that to act one needs another that is efficacious? And I ask first the Reverend Jesuit Fathers, how is a sufficient grace in the sense of the Congruists sufficient, since it is not sufficient, and that to act it must be followed by another that is congruent? See their System.

I ask in the second place the friends of Quesnel, who treat this sufficient grace in the sense of the Thomists of folly, of monstrosity, and of absurdity: A just man who sins for the first time, and who dying in his sin, is damned for an eternity, could he sufficiently avoid the sin, or could he not? If he could not

sufficiently, with what justice does the God whom we adore, just and merciful as He is, punish him eternally in Hell? Could one imagine a Tyrant more cruel and more unjust than a God of this nature, who would require of his subjects under the most rigorous penalties that they could not sufficiently accomplish? He could therefore be this just man, and he could sufficiently, avoid the sin, and observe the law. And yet besides that, in the very principles of these Gentlemen, to observe actually the law and avoid the sin, it was necessary a grace stronger and more efficacious, that gave him the will and the doing. This supposed, I ask them, I say, how was this power sufficient; since it was not sufficient, and that to observe the law actually, and avoid the sin, it was necessary something stronger and more efficacious?

Let one grant me once that in every tolerable system one must admit sufficient helps, besides which however for acting actually it is necessary that they be followed by others more efficacious: at least let one not claim with Calvin and Jansenius that the Commandments of God are not sufficiently possible to the just who does not observe them: or with Pelagius and the Priests of Marseille that God gives indifferently to all men, to those who fall as to those who persevere, graces respectively as strong, as prevenient and as abundant; that He cherishes with as tender and as efficacious a love Jacob and Esau the Reprobate and the Predestined; in a word that He gives equally and

solely the grace of possibility: in such a way that the one who converts himself has nothing more on the side of God, who makes him convert himself, than the one who does not convert himself; but that it depends uniquely on his free will to render efficacious by his consent this grace of possibility, which is presented to him as to any other, and that by tearing himself thus from the mass of corruption, he can by himself distinguish himself from the Children of Adam, and put himself in the rank of the Children of adoption. In this case, I admit, one avoids the difficulty; but I do not think that our adversaries buy at this price the feeble advantage of insulting us.

I say therefore, and I think that every Catholic must say with me, that a grace that gives the man the power to act so much that if he does not act, it is not because he cannot, but because he does not want to act, I say, I say, and I maintain that such a grace is justly and in a very proper sense called sufficient, even though for acting actually he must be followed by another stronger and more efficacious: and it is wrong that one reproaches us with abusing terms, when we speak of the strong.

It is true that it is not sufficient in every way, or, according to the language of the School, in every sort of genus; as if it were not necessary

anything more in any other way than this one: since in effect, it is necessary still an efficacious grace that gives the action: also, is it not in this general sense, that one understands, nor that one must understand this term of sufficient. But it is sufficient in its rank, in its order, in its genus, that is to say, in that which is of virtue and of power to act. To speak thus, to say of such a grace that it is sufficient, is to speak in a very natural sense and as one ordinarily speaks. For does one not say every day that the fire is sufficient to burn, although it is necessary besides that to apply it to the combustible matter? That the bread is sufficient to nourish, although it is necessary besides to eat and digest it? That the Passion of Jesus Christ is sufficient to save us, although it is never applied to us? That the understanding is sufficient for the man to know, although he never knows it if it is not applied to its object by an ulterior motion? It is thus, I say, that one speaks in common language, that St. Thomas authorizes by the same examples that I have just cited. [30] [31] The same thing therefore when we say that the fire is sufficient to burn, the understanding to know etc., these ways of speaking do not signify that it is sufficient only to burn, or to know actually, it is necessary nothing more in any other genus than the fire or the understanding; but only that in the fact of virtue of burning or of knowing, it is necessary nothing more than that of the

[30] I-II, Q. 109, Art. 3
[31] III, Q. 61, Art. 1, Repl. 3

fire, or that of the understanding. Thus when we say that the grace is sufficient for a good work, this does not mean that for acting actually, it is necessary nothing more; but only that to the exclusion of every other of this nature, it puts us sufficiently in a state to be able to act if we want; as the fire is sufficient to burn, the understanding to know, in that which is of virtue of burning or of knowing. She is, I say, sufficient in her order, that is to say, in that which is of giving the power to act. She gives it, and in this she is efficacious: she gives it sufficiently, because he needs nothing more to have the power to act, and in this she is sufficient; in such a way that if I do not act, it is not because I cannot, but because I do not want to act. And I do not want to act, because by my pure will, which of itself can do all evil, I freely and voluntarily place an obstacle to efficacious grace, which without that would be infallibly given to me, and which I would receive the will and the doing. Thus the first cause of the absence of efficacious grace is ourselves, as St. Thomas says. It is not she who lacks us, it is we who lack her: defectus gratiæ causa prima est ex nobis.[32] [33] [34] [35]

CONTINUED ERRORS OF FR QUESNEL

[32] I-II, Q. 112, Art. 3, Repl. 2
[33] Commentary on Hebrews Ch. 12, Lect. 3
[34] Commentary on Sentences I, Dist. 40, Q. 4, Art. 2
[35] Contra Gentiles III, Ch. 159

XVIII. The accord of the all-powerful operation of God in the heart of man with the free consent of his will is shown to us first in the Incarnation, as in the source and model of all the other operations of mercy and of grace, all as gratuitous and as dependent on God as this original operation. Luke 1:38.

SENTIMENTS OF THE THOMIST SCHOOL

XVI. The grace efficacious by itself is not purely passive and inanimate; it acts as second cause, it acts freely with a liberty that consists not only in an exemption from constraint, but even in an exemption Free will is the cause of its own movement, because man by free will moves himself to act; however this is not from the necessity of liberty that it be the first cause of itself, id quod liberum est. Just as it is not necessary that something be the first cause of itself if it requires another to be the first cause of it. God is the first cause moving natural causes and voluntary ones; and by moving natural causes He does not take away that they be natural; thus this or that action moving voluntary causes does not take away that their actions be voluntary; but rather in them He does this: for He operates in each according to its own property.[36] Indeed they would say that the will of man from necessity moves itself to

[36] On Evil, Q. 6

something, yet they would not posit that the will acts from necessity, etc. But this opinion is heretical, for it takes away the reason of merit and demerit in human acts; for it is not seen to be meritorious or demeritorious what something does from necessity that it cannot avoid. [37]

Inclination does not impose necessity, but having grace it can act or not act. the Reprobate and the Predestined; in a word that He gives equally and solely the grace of possibility: in such a way that the one who converts himself has nothing more on the side of God, who makes him convert himself, than the one who does not convert himself; but that it depends uniquely on his free will to render efficacious by his consent this grace of possibility, which is presented to him as to any other, and that by tearing himself thus from the mass of corruption, he can by himself distinguish himself from the Children of Adam, and put himself in the rank of the Children of adoption. In this case, I admit, one avoids the difficulty; but I do not think that our adversaries buy at this price the feeble advantage of insulting us.

I say therefore, and I think that every Catholic must say with me, that a grace that gives the man the power to act so much that if he does not act, it is not because he cannot, but because he does not want to act, I say, I say, and I

[37] Summa Theologica I, Q. 63, Art. 3, Repl. 1

maintain that such a grace is justly and in a very proper sense called sufficient, even though for acting actually he must be followed by another stronger and more efficacious: and it is wrong that one reproaches us with abusing terms, when we speak of the strong. It is true that it is not sufficient in every way, or, according to the language of the School, in every sort of genus; as if it were not necessary anything more in any other way than this one: since in effect, it is necessary still an efficacious grace that gives the action: also, is it not in this general sense, that one understands, nor that one must understand this term of sufficient. But it is sufficient in its rank, in its order, in its genus, that is to say, in that which is of virtue and of power to act. To speak thus, to say of such a grace that it is sufficient, is to speak in a very natural sense and as one ordinarily speaks. For does one not say every day that the fire is sufficient to burn, although it is necessary besides that to apply it to the combustible matter? That the bread is sufficient to nourish, although it is necessary besides to eat and digest it? That the Passion of Jesus Christ is sufficient to save us, although it is never applied to us? That the understanding is sufficient for the man to know, although he never knows it if it is not applied to its object by an ulterior motion? It is thus, I say, that one speaks in common language, that St. Thomas authorized by the same examples that I have just cited. [38] [39]

[38] Summa Theologica I-II, Q. 109, Art. 1
[39] Ibid III, Q. 61, Art. 1, Repl. 3

CONTINUED ERRORS OF FATHER QUESNEL

XIX. All those whom God wants to save by Jesus Christ are infallibly saved. John 6:40.

XX. The desires of Jesus always have their effect; they bring peace to the bottom of hearts when He gives them. John 20:19.

XXI. Jesus Christ gave Himself to death to deliver forever by His blood those whom He loved, that is to say the elect. Gal. 4:5. 6:7.

XXII. How much one must renounce the things of earth and oneself to have confidence in one's own propitiation, to say: Jesus Christ, His love, His death and His mysteries, etc.

SENTIMENTS OF THE THOMIST SCHOOL

XV. Jansenius, as we have said, denies that God wills to save all men, consequently denies this principle in the 5th condemned proposition, that

Jesus Christ died and shed His blood for all. The cited propositions say, or at least strongly imply, the same thing. But for us, far from denying the errors injurious to God's goodness, we say, with the Apostle and the beloved Disciple, that Jesus Christ is the victim of propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world. John 1:2. With St. Augustine in book 6 against Julian chap. 4, that He gave Himself to death for all those who were dead in Adam, therefore for the just and for sinners, for the elect and for the reprobate. With the Angel of the School, that He is the mediator between God and men; not between God and some men, but between God and all men, consequently that He has effect for all to His Father, His death, His passion, His blood, His vows, His prayers: because He willed and desired the salvation of all with a sincere and true antecedent will; it is true and inefficacious for the reprobate, because of the obstacles they bring, says the same Doctor; consequently efficacious for the elect: therefore every man, whoever he may be, can and ought to say after the Apostle, Jesus loved me and gave Himself for me. Gal. 2:20. That the grace of Adam was a consequence of creation, and was due to the whole and sound nature, as I said before Quesnel the Doctor, as Baius said in equivalent terms, Prop. 21. But it must be recognized with the Thomist School that the grace of the state of innocence, as that of the present state, was a supernatural gift, a gratuitous

privilege accorded by God to Adam, who elevated him to a supernatural order and end, made him also produce supernatural merits and proportioned to this end. These propositions, as the infinite difference between the grace of Adam and the Christian grace is essential, are understood as habitual and sanctifying grace. Calvin condemned by the Council of Trent sess. 6 can. 1, taught that we were justified in this grace by a simple imputation of the justice of Jesus Christ. St. Thomas expressly contradicts this error in all the Articles of the 2nd Question of Justification. the sanctifying in himself was proportioned: the Christian grace sanctifies us in Jesus Christ is all-powerful and worthy of the Son of God. Eph. 1:6. It cannot be understood as remission of guilt if there is not an added infusion of grace. Thus the difference that the condemned propositions put between the grace of Adam and Christian grace cannot subsist according to the doctrine of St. Thomas. [40] [41] [42] [43] [44] [45] [46] [47] [48]

1. That there remains a soul etc.

2. When God softens etc.

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[40] ST III, Q. 79, Art. 7, Repl. 2
[41] ST I-II, Q. 113, Art. 1, Repl. 1
[42] Ibid, Q. 109, Art. 2
[43] Comm. 1 Tim. 2, Lect. 1
[44] Comm. 1 Cor. 8, Lect. 1
[45] Comm. III Sent., D. 20, Q. 1, Art. 1
[46] Comm. II Sent., D. 31, Q. 1, Art. 2, Repl. 3
[47] Quodlibet I, Q. 1, Art. 8
[48] De Malo, Q. 4, Art. 1, Repl. 1

3. The sinner is not free except for evil without the grace of the Liberator. Luke 8:29.

CONTINUED ERRORS OF FATHER QUESNEL

XXIII. General power for every good, that exterior graces only serve to harden him further, that he is free only for evil, that he has light only to go astray, ardor only to rush headlong, force only to wound himself, that he can love nothing except toward his own damnation, etc. See the first System. Finally, of whatever grace one understands these propositions.

XXIV. the books of piety, what the catechisms teach, and how people commonly speak. So that to take these terms of love of God and charity in another abstract and unusual sense, or for a natural love of good, or for any movement even supernatural that carries us toward God under some respect other than that of goodness, and this in a book of morals made for the instruction of the faithful, and where this love and charity is characterized by traits that hardly seem to fit anything but Christian charity; as when one says that it is a love that refers everything to God, that God rewards.

SENTIMENTS OF THE THOMIST SCHOOL.

XVI. Only pride, vanity, opposition to God himself, instead of sentiments of adoration, gratitude, and love. Rom. 1:19. 42. There is only the grace of Jesus Christ that makes man fit for the sacrifice of faith: without that, only impurity, only indignity. Acts 11:9.

XVII. his actions. Luke 15:13. 46. Cupidity or charity makes the use of the senses good or bad. Matt. 5:28. 47. Obedience to the law must flow from grace one understands these propositions, they are no less condemnable, nor less opposed to the School of St. Thomas. This holy Doctor, and after him his disciples, teach that although sin darkens the understanding and weakens the powers of the will for good, it does not entirely destroy them: from which they infer that man, with these natural powers that remain to him and with only the ordinary concurrence of God, without any other grace—even sufficient—can know and does know several natural truths, can do and does do several morally good actions, at least the easier ones, such as honoring his parents, giving some small alms, observing justice, rendering duties to his friends. Therefore once again one cannot at all say, in their principles, that man without grace, in whatever sense one takes it, is in a general impotence for

every good, that he has light only to go astray, force only to wound himself, that interior graces serve only to harden him further, that he can love nothing except toward his damnation, that there is in him only pride, vanity, opposition to God, impurity, indignity. These are so many errors that they have already condemned long ago with Pope Pius V and Pope Gregory XIII in Baius, and that they still condemn today in Father Quesnel with Pope Clement XI. We therefore say first of all that, although charity is the form of all the virtues—that is to say, although it gives them their perfection and their merit, as St. Thomas teaches they can nevertheless subsist essentially without it, as the same holy Doctor says in express terms in the preceding article and elsewhere.[49] Consequently, it is an error to maintain that without charity there is no faith (prop. 52), no hope (prop. 57), no fear of God nor Religion (prop. 58).

We say in the second place that charity and cupidity are not the only principles that make us act: but that we also act by faith, by hope, by fear, by all the moral virtues, and in the last resort by every good will and every natural love of good, which is a good and lovable principle. Faith inclines man to believe, even when it is unformed. Faith and hope attain God according to that which comes to us from Him, knowledge of truth or acquisition of good.

[49] ST II-II, Q. 23, Art. 8

Fear of God operates to avoid sin. Moral virtues, insofar as they are operative of good, etc.[50] [51] Their actions consequently that they produce, although non-meritorious for eternal life, are nevertheless also good and virtuous, or naturally or supernaturally, according to the quality of the principle from which they come. (m) So that we hold it for an error already equivalently condemned in Baius to say that when the love of God no longer reigns in the heart, it is necessary that carnal cupidity reign and corrupt all our actions (prop. 45). That charity or cupidity alone make the use of the senses good or bad (prop. 46). That without the love of God there is only hypocrisy or false justice (prop. 47). That without charity one can be only darkness, wandering, sin (prop. 48). That there is no good work without love of God (prop. 49). That it is in vain that one cries to God, my Father, if it is not the spirit of charity that cries (prop. 50). That charity alone makes Christian actions Christian by relation to God and to Jesus Christ (prop. 53). That it is charity alone that speaks to God, that it is she alone that God hears (prop. 54). That God crowns only charity (prop. 56). That he who runs in vain by another motive (prop. 55). That God rewards only charity alone because charity alone honors God (prop. 56). That the prayer of the impious is a new sin (prop. 59). These are so many errors that every Thomist, faithful disciple of his Master,

[50] Ibid, Q. 5, Art. 2, Repl. 2; Ibid, Q. 23, Art. 6; Q. 24, Art 2, Repl. 2;
[51] ST I-II Q. 65, Art. 2, Repl. 1 & Art. 4; Ibid, Q. 55, Art. 3

condemns with the Church. I limit myself here, Monsieur, nevertheless disposed to satisfy you on the rest, if you wish it. The propositions that I omit to present do not interest us more than the other Catholic Schools. As for those that I have just exposed, I believe I have sufficiently acquitted myself of my word, and you have shown clearly that they are opposed to our sentiments, that we condemn them in a very natural sense by the principles and even by the words of St. Thomas, and that one cannot infer more from the Constitution Unigenitus, against our School, against all the other Catholic Schools, and in particular against that of the Jesuit Fathers, who in the system of congruent grace hold and must hold in several things the same language as we do.

I therefore conclude by making part of a reflection that comes to me. The Jesuit Fathers have to answer the principal difficulties that are opposed to us; they suffer the most troublesome inconveniences that seem to arise from the system of the Jesuits. Grace is efficacious by itself, and they have none of the advantages. They have abandoned the School of St. Thomas on this article, because they believed that in the principles the liberty suffered too much. They have softened Molina's opinion, because in giving too much to liberty, it did not sufficiently accord to God; and by the system of middle grace congruent that they invented, they believed they found a just milieu, and

the power to act without congruent grace is nevertheless just as necessary to act in effect, as is the efficacious grace by itself in the principles of the Thomists: and if this one is a first cause or a motion of the first cause that must necessarily intervene to determine and make the will of man act as second cause; that one is a condition or a help that must necessarily assist the determination and in his action, without which she never determines herself and never acts. Otherwise the foreknowledge of God is deceived, it is fallible and uncertain; the grace is at the same time congruent and not congruent, and the whole system is overturned. Moreover, one and the other grace, efficacious and congruent, depend absolutely on God; one is not more than the other accorded to all. God refuses them and gives them to whom He pleases and when He pleases; it is not more or less in bad disposition to obtain one than the other: and if one accuses the efficacious grace of stopping the course of the will because she does not always move it; I will accuse the congruent grace of the same disorder, because she does not always assist: if finally I have the right in the opinion of the Thomists to reproach God that He does not give me efficacious graces necessary to do good; I have no less in the opinion of the Congruists to reproach Him that He does not give me congruent graces that are equally necessary to me. For such must be, Monsieur, the sentiments of the Jesuits, if they want to speak consequently to their System; and it is thus

in effect that I have heard them sometimes respond in the public disputes of the School on several things that I have just advanced.

Everything is therefore equal up to here in fact of real or apparent inconveniences by relation to liberty; but here are some very real ones that result from the system of the Congruists, and of which that of the Thomists is exempt. This congruent grace that is necessary to do good, according to the Authors, does not act on the will of man to determine it to this good movement; she abandons it in some way in this to its proper weakness; she leaves it in its passive indifference: she is ready, it is true, but she waits until she determines herself to do good; if she is indifferent to not doing it as to doing it, or even more inclined toward evil than toward good? How can she give herself this determination that she does not have, to which she has even repugnance, and of which God must be the first author and the first cause. In truth, Monsieur, if reason were the cause then virtues are good habits and good operative powers.[52] Operative virtues; Faith generates hope, hope in turn charity[53]; but hope is first generated and can be without it; therefore faith can be without hope and hope without charity. In truth, Sir, if reason were on the side of the Jesuits in this matter, strange things would happen in the world. We would see every person sunk in an insurmountable laziness, eternally

[52] ST I-II, Q. 55, Art. 3
[53] Ibid, Q. 65, Art. 4

indifferent and suspended between good and evil. They would fall into a kind of lethargy from which they could awaken only on the day of the Last Judgment—and even then the trumpet would have to borrow something from efficacious grace itself or from physical premotion. Or, what would be even worse, if without either of those they determined themselves to act (wounded and weakened for good as they are by sin), following the dominant inclination and violent bent of their corrupt hearts, they would all rush headlong toward evil, and not one would do good. In the Thomist view, by contrast, the grace that is necessary to do good acts on the will, moves it, and determines it strongly and efficaciously—yet gently, as Scripture says, and in perfect harmony with nature: fortiter et suaviter. It draws the will out of its idle indifference and gives it the actual and free determination it did not have and never could have had on its own. In a word, this grace makes the will act, and makes it act freely. It is therefore true, Monsieur, that in the system of congruent grace, human freedom not only encounters the apparent difficulties that people claim are attached to the Thomist system; it actually suffers very real and far more troublesome inconveniences there.

I also pointed out that, on the other hand, God and His grace do not preserve their rights any better in this system than in Molina's. Despite all the

softening language, one recognizes there no more than in Molina's view either the primacy and sovereign dominion of God over the creature or the true character of the grace of Jesus Christ—the grace that heals our wounds, revives our weaknesses, and by its almighty power infallibly makes us do good, exactly as St. Augustine defended it with such zeal against the Pelagians and semi-Pelagians. For if, as I have said, it remains true in this system (notwithstanding all its adjustments) that it is not God who, by His all-powerful virtue, determines the creature, but rather the creature who determines God by its consent; if grace does not operate on our wills to make them act but merely concurs with the action once we are already acting—then it clearly follows that God is not the first cause of this determination and action. His grace neither heals the wounds nor revives the languors of our sick and weakened wills. Consequently, the rights of God and of grace are no better preserved here than in Molina's system. I could prove this more fully if I did not fear wearying you with too long a letter.

Judge for yourself, Monsieur, which side every person of good sense ought to embrace, and on which side there is less risk of favoring error. This is not to say that I claim Thomism is completely free of every difficulty. On the contrary, I admit that, despite its clear advantages over the Congruist system,

the harmony between grace and freedom will always involve some obscurity. St. Augustine himself acknowledged it, and anyone who claims the opposite certainly departs from the principles of this holy Doctor and legitimately renders himself suspect of the very errors he fought against.

At the same time, I add with him that one must not deny what is evident and certain simply because one does not understand what is obscure and difficult: "*Numquid ideo negandum est quod apertum est, quia comprehendi non potest quod occultum est?*" (***St. Augustine, De dono perseverantiae, ch. 14***). Would I deny, for example, that God is free or immutable simply because I do not understand how these two qualities can coexist in the same subject? Would I deny that the sea has its tides, that a magnet attracts iron, that the stars influence our bodies, and so on, simply because I do not fully grasp how these things happen? Thus, on the one hand I know that man is free: he can do good or evil, he can save himself or damn himself, and God has placed his destiny in his own hands, so that He has the right either to reward him if he does well or to punish him if he does evil. This is a clear, incontestable truth; it is even an article of faith for those who lack full evidence of it. On the other hand, I know that man depends absolutely on God both in his being and in his action; he is in God's hands like clay in the hands of the potter. I know that this Supreme Being sovereignly disposes of

our wills: He turns them as He pleases, when He pleases, and where He pleases, by the all-powerful force of His grace. He works in us both the willing and the doing according to His good pleasure. Without Him we can neither do nor think anything that merits His love and glory. This truth appears no less certain or evident than the first; it is stated in clear terms in Scripture and the Fathers. But I do not fully understand how this perfect freedom of man can coexist with this total dependence on God. Must I therefore deny one or the other of these two certain and evident truths—that man is free, or that he depends on God—simply because I do not understand how they agree, when that agreement is obscure and difficult? *Numquid ideo negandum est quod apertum est, quia comprehendi non potest quod occultum est*? Certainly not. That would be to sin against good sense and against the first rules of philosophy, which require us to argue from a clear principle to an obscure conclusion, not from an obscure principle to an evident conclusion.

So what should a person do who feels some difficulty on this subject and struggles to satisfy himself by his own lights? Despite the perplexities and the effort involved, he must never abandon the truth he recognizes. He must hold as certain what truly is certain: that man is free, yet that he nonetheless depends on God in the way we have explained.

As for the rest that he does not understand—how this freedom can bear this dependence, or how this dependence does not destroy this freedom—he should refer it to the disputes of the schools. For the present, it is enough for him to know two things. First, that God is almighty and can do—and in fact does—infinitely more than the human mind can comprehend. Second, that if during this life he makes good use of his freedom and of the grace offered to him, he will certainly possess God in the blessed realm of eternity and will know perfectly in Him what he knows here below only through the obscure veils of faith and the weak light of reason.

That, Monsieur, is the side I would advise a great many people to take today—people who are not capable of these lofty speculations or the profound mysteries of theology, yet who often entangle themselves unnecessarily and risk falling into error.

I have the honor to remain, Monsieur; Your most humble and most obedient servant, - ***Fr. Charles-René Billuart, O.P.***

THE LIFE OF FATHER CHARLES-RENÉ BILLUART, O.P.

Translated by @thomisticae on 𝕏

I undertake the task of describing the life of a man who had no equal in his time, not with the verbosity adorned with the flowers of eloquence, for a man of such power, both in deed and speech, needs no fabricated praises. I do not undertake this to embellish, for he requires no false commendations; a man whose powerful deeds and words have made him celebrated throughout the entire world. I will describe what I have seen, heard, and touched with sincerity and in a simpler style.

For thirty years, I have been a companion in his journeys and labors, and he did not conceal the more intimate movements of his heart from me. On the day before his death, he appointed me as the custodian of all his writings and

manuscripts. I faithfully preserve this deposit as the final proof of his friendship and in service to scholars, and I do not want anyone to remain unaware of it. Although his profound erudition is proclaimed by numerous published volumes, his humility always surpassed everything, and his right hand accomplished more than his left hand knew. Therefore, the Most Reverend Father Jean-Thomas de Boxadors, our Master General, entrusted me with the task of manifesting these things. I intend to fulfill this duty for the glory of the Author and Giver of all good things, for the everlasting memory of my close relative and dear friend, and for the example and consolation of the reader.

He hailed from the city of Revin on the banks of the Meuse, near Campania, subject to the supreme rule of the lord abbot of Prüm, now the elector of Trier, and the lord count of Brias. He was a subject of the French kingdom, under the protection and defense of the Most Christian King. Born on the eighteenth day of January in the year 1685 to the honorable and pious parents, Mr. Jean-François Billuart and Mrs. Elisabeth Jadot, sister of the Third Order of St. Dominic, both benefactors of our convent. On the same day, he was

baptized with the sponsors Mr. Charles de Rouville and Mrs. Maria de Monnin, in the name of Mr. René d'Epinoy, the lord of Loni, and Mrs. Ludovica Bouttez, husband and wife.

His distinguished physical structure and handsome appearance promised great things, and the outcome did not disappoint those expectations. Barely after overcoming infancy, the devoted and loving parents, desiring to provide for the education and instruction of their beloved son, sent him to Charleville to pursue the course of humanities in the Jesuit college. As the boy grew older and wiser, the lover of solitude and despiser of childish games, singularly devoted to his studies, surpassed his fellow students by far, presenting himself as someone to be admired rather than imitated.

Hardly having reached the sixteenth year of his age, he already contemplated renouncing the world, dedicating himself to religion to serve God and pursue his studies more freely. A Jesuit professor explored his mind, and after numerous attempts and the secret of his heart finally revealed, he spared no effort to lead the student into the Society. It was not in vain, for the excellent

young man agreed. However, his parents, intending to approve of their son's vocation, were not deterred in vain. Providence, which is not mistaken in its arrangements, had chosen him for better things, and, complying with the parents' wishes, he was diverted from his preconceived plan. Carried away by the sweet and conquering spirit of grace, he prostrated himself at the feet of the prior of the Revin convent, ardently requesting to be admitted among the sons of St. Dominic.

In the year 1701, he entered the Order of the Friars Preachers, and he was sent to the Islands to begin his novitiate. After completing a year of probation, he made his profession in our convent in Revin on the seventh day of November in the year 1702. With the same step with which he had begun, he continued. Having completed the curriculum of philosophy and theology in Revin, with a prior dispensation from the Pope due to the age requirement, he was ordained a priest by the Bishop of Namur on the first of January in the year 1708.

In the same year, he goes to Liège to defend theology under Father Poelman, a professor at the Gand convent. Upon completing his studies, he is appointed the lecturer in philosophy at our college in Douai in 1710. In 1711, at the request of his convent superiors, he is appointed the lecturer for the Philosophy course in Revin, starting the following year, with a dispensation for the second course in Douai. He then lectured on theology there until 1715 when he is appointed Master of Students at our college of St. Thomas in Douai.

During that time, he published a pamphlet of 160 pages in 12mo, titled "De Mente Ecclesiæ Catholicæ circa accidentia Eucharistiæ, adversus Dominum Antonium l'Engrand, S. Th. licentiatum et philosophiæ Cartesianæ professorem in academia Duacensi." It was printed in Liège by U. Ancion and received universal acclaim, and the opponent either would not or could not respond.

In 1717, he earns the degree of Bachelor, and in 1718, he receives the letters of patent for the office of second regent in our college in Douai, starting the following year. In the years 1718 and 1719, the people of Liège listen with astonishment and admiration to his sermons during Advent and Lent. His fame, widely spread, leads the noble and pious Count de Tylli, the commander-in-chief of the United Provinces cavalry and governor of the city of Utrecht, to request him to deliver a sermon there on the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament and defend the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist against the Calvinists with strong arguments. Both Catholics and heretics attended. Those captivated by the orator's eloquence were inflamed with a new ardor of love for the most august Sacrament, while others, grinding their teeth in envy, were torn apart by malice. Yielding to the force of his arguments, some declared him the champion of an evil cause. Yet, it was not enough. He was summoned to the Civic Hall by the magistrate and prominent supporters of the heretical sect, and the aforementioned subject was proposed and accepted for debate. The primary minister of our enemies subtly presented a truncated text of Augustine and contended for a figurative interpretation. However, our Doctor

immediately detected the deceit and exposed the Calvinist by referring to the source and showing that the attribution made by Augustine regarding the sacrifice was being claimed by the Calvinist for the Sacrament. The ministers, silenced and ashamed, withdrew; and the leaders, filled with honor and gratitude, dismissed our orator. Hence, applause from our supporters and torment in the hearts of our enemies. In the same year, he travels to Paris and is honored by the learned. In the year 1720, he publishes a pamphlet written in French, consisting of 97 pages in 12mo, titled "Le Thomisme vengé de sa prétendue condamnation par la Constitution UNIGENITUS, adressé en forme de Lettre à un Abbé par un Religieux de l'Ordre de S. Dominique." Printed in Brussels by Jean Léonard. This work was not contested by anyone but was praised by all and quickly distributed, and not without reason; until now, no one had presented Thomistic, Jansenist, and Jesuit systems in clearer light.

In 1721, he was elected prior of his convent, and he continued in this office until 1725 when he obtained a license and was appointed as the primary regent at our college in Douai. It can hardly be expressed how great his prudence and skill were in acting and governing. An excellent father, a

generous benefactor, the model of his flock, patient with all, beloved within and without, fervent in the worship of God, he adorned the church with significant ornaments: organs, iron grating, church pavement, altars, confessional seats, preacher's pulpit, bells, marble pavement for the choir, numerous paintings, tall candelabra, tabernacle, cross, etc., all made of silver. But these are minor accomplishments. Despite the anxieties inseparable from the office of prior and his continuous illnesses, he did not cease from studies day and night.

In 1723, he wrote a work in French, consisting of 42 pages in 4to, titled "Lettre du R. P. Charles René Billuart, etc., à Messieurs les Docteurs de la Faculté de Théologie de l'Université de Douai, avec des Réflexions sur les Notes calomnieuses qu'ils ont attachées à leur censure du 22 d'août 1722 contre les RR. Pères Massouillé et Contenson de l'Ordre des FF. Prêcheurs." The doctors mentioned did not respond to this letter, and it's no wonder they couldn't, as they had erred shamefully, and their censure was rightly condemned in Rome by Apostolic decree on July 18, 1729. In response to the procurator of the Faculty seeking correction and promising amendment, the

answer was: "Remove the parallel contained in the admonition to the reader and in the preface, and the writings against Fathers Massouille and Contenson and against St. Thomas. After these corrections, send the censure to Rome for approval or disapproval." This information is confirmed by a letter in my possession from Reverend Father Goolzat, who received it from the mouth of the secretary of the Index. This letter is referred to at the end of the Apologia Thomismi triumphantis.

In the year 1724, on the 19th of November, a brief titled "Demissas preces BENEDICTI Papæ XIII ad universos Fratres Ordinis Prædicatorum Professores, adversus calumnias doctrinæ SS. Augustini et Thomæ intentatas" was published, which served as a seedbed for controversies and disputes between the Jesuits and Thomists. An anonymous writer penned in French "Reflexiones supra prædictum breve," insinuating that it was not directed towards the Jesuits but only towards the Quesnelists as detractors of our school. It was suggested that it only declared Thomists' ability to teach their opinions freely as before, without obtaining any special privilege for our Doctrine from it.

In response to these reflections, Father BILLUART produced a pamphlet in French, consisting of 21 pages in 4to, titled "Examen critique des Réflexions sur le Bref de notre S. Père le Pape BENOIT XIII, du 6 novembre 1724, adressé aux Dominicains." In this work, he proves that the Pope accuses not only the Quesnelists but also the Molinists of the crime of calumny, considering them among the detractors of Thomistic doctrine. Furthermore, it is argued that this doctrine is commended and preferred by the Supreme Pontiff, while the opinions of the Molinists are only tolerated negatively. He concludes that it is no longer permissible for Jansenists and Quesnelists, on one hand, to mock the sufficient grace of Thomists, calling their system an indigestible mishmash (galimatias); and on the other hand, Molinists cannot, without rebellion against the Supreme Pontiff, go beyond their assertions about our doctrine of Grace, stating that it is intrinsically efficacious or has a physical predetermination. He argues that such claims harm freedom, are injurious to the justice and sanctity of God, contradict Scripture and the Council of Trent, and are similar to Calvin's motion "as egg to egg," a

statement that was almost verbatim asserted by Father Fontaine, a Jesuit professor in Douai, defending the thesis in 1725, after the said brief.

It should be noted that Father BILLUART had entrusted one of his friends (whose name I refrain from mentioning) with his manuscript to faithfully submit it to the press. Unbeknownst to the author, this friend included additional materials related to the controversies over Auxiliis and the Chinese Rites. The passages found in the printed copies from the bottom of page 3 to line 28 of page 5 and from line 11 of page 12 to line 13 of page 14 are not present in the original manuscript in my possession. Therefore, Father BILLUART rightfully rejected and deemed the distorted work spurious, instructing that the copies be suppressed. However, this happened later, as many copies were already disseminated.

Hence, the Anonymous assailant against the author of the aforementioned Critical Examination indulges in invectives and sends a letter filled with atrocious insults. In response to these letters, Father BILLUART produced a work in French, in quarto, comprising 114 pages, titled "Le Thomisme

triomphant par le Bref DEMISSAS PRECES de BENOIT XIII, ou Justification de l'Examen critique des Réflexions sur le Bref, contre une lettre anonyme adressée à l'auteur de l'Examen, par un théologien de l'Ordre de Saint-Dominique." Although the author considers the additions to the Critical Examination as spurious, he contends to prove their authenticity, dividing his work into two parts. He strengthens and demonstrates various arguments supporting the two points asserted in the Critical Examination and undertakes the defense of Father Serry's history against the calumnies unjustly imposed by the Anonymous.

This work gives rise to a new adversary. Another friend supplies an adulterated text of the first letter from Lord Fenelon to Quesnel. Our author, venerating the trustworthiness of his friend in age and erudition, cites the text on page 81. In the year 1726, D. Stievenard, a canon of Cambrai, rises up and publishes a work in which he portrays Father BILLUART as deceitful and a calumniator, pressing for redress for the injury inflicted on the memory of the late Archbishop Fenelon through our superiors. Now, our author needs both defensive and offensive weapons to dissolve and dissipate the confederates

attacking him from both sides, which he accomplishes by responding to Mr. Stievenard with a pamphlet in quarto, containing 8 pages, titled "Réponse de l'auteur du Thomisme Triomphant à M. Stievenard, chanoine de Cambrai, au sujet de son Apologie pour feu Mgr de Fénelon."

However, the controversies are not yet settled. In the same year, Mr. Stievenard prepares a second Apology for Lord Fenelon, in which he rebukes Father BILLUART for borrowing his arguments from Jansenists hostile to Lord Fenelon, and he pursues Father BILLUART with a biting style. In response to this Apology, Father BILLUART counters with another pamphlet in quarto, comprising 21 pages, titled "Avis d'un ecclésiastique de Paris à M. Stievenard, chanoine de Cambrai, sur la seconde Apologie pour feu M. de Fénelon, archevêque de Cambrai," adding a supplement. In this advisory, he reaffirms the points previously mentioned and provides additional demonstrations. Unsatisfied with these responses, Mr. Stievenard composes a third Apology, to which Father BILLUART opposes another pamphlet in quarto, containing 21 pages, titled "Justification de l'avis d'un ecclésiastique de Paris, etc." In this work, overlooking repetitions and trivialities, he sharply

rebuts the apologist, exposes his contradictions and calumnies in clear light, and focuses on the main point of contention. In the year 1728, on October 15th, when he commenced the third year in the office of Primary Regent at our college in Douai, he was appointed as the Provincial Prior of our Province of Saint Rose in Belgium. Blessed is the province under such a leader! He shines with examples, instructs with words, enkindles with charity, soothes with courtesy, promotes studies, wisely arranges ordinances for regular observance and temporal administration, makes the yoke of Christ sweet, and lightens His burden, yet without softening it. He wins the hearts of not only all his subordinates but especially those of bishops and magnates. The following year, he is honored with a doctoral degree.

Meanwhile, the hostile man did not sleep. Under the triumphant auspices of Pope Benedict XIII, he had enviously devised new snares for our schools, spreading nine anonymous letters filled with reproaches and insults against the defender of triumphant Thomism. Father BILLUART, who had temporarily set aside his own duties, once again confronts the Anonymous adversary. While holding the reins of governance with one hand, he opposes the

Anonymous with the other, presenting a work in quarto comprising 196 pages, titled "Apologie du Thomisme Triomphant, contre les neuf Lettres anonymes qui ont paru depuis peu. On justifie aussi par occasion l'Histoire des congrégations de Auxiliis du P. Serry contre les chicanes de ses adversaires. A Liége, chez J.-P. Gramme, 1731." It is not surprising that this work remained unshaken as it was supported by demonstrated truth.

In the year 1732, he delivers sermons throughout Lent before an innumerable assembly of people in Liège. In 1733, in the month of November, he is elected as the Prior of his convent in Revin and continues in this office until 1741. In 1743, he publishes a pamphlet in quarto containing 63 pages, titled "Réponse à l'auteur d'un libelle imprimé cette année 1734 à Roterdam, intitulé : la Créance des églises réformées touchant la sainte Vierge, où l'on fait voir les impostures grossières et les calomnies atroces, les paralogismes et les inepties dont cet ouvrage est rempli. Avec permission des supérieurs." The heretic remains silent in response to this work.

In 1736, the most serene Prince Louis, Duke of Orleans, a man whom neither the past nor the future will surpass, held the dominion of the city of Revin. Upon hearing of Father BILLUART, the pious prince desired to see his face. Father BILLUART, upon hearing this, traveled to Paris, accompanied by me, who had supervised the theses dedicated to this prince the previous month. As soon as he arrived, he was warmly received by the wise and affable prince under the auspices of Count d'Argenson. They conversed familiarly and learnedly. The honors and benevolent signs and benefits with which he was showered when he departed were witnessed by me, who saw and heard it.

In the years 1737 and 1738, assisted by the aforementioned prince, he initiated and completed a splendid and extensive building for the infirm, a library, and hospitals. He expanded, adorned, and enriched his own convent. During this time, a pseudo-history of Baianism was published by Father Duchesne, a Jesuit. Father BILLUART contested this with a work in duodecimo containing 242 pages, titled "Apologie du R. P. Pierre Soto, Dominicain, et des anciennes censures de Louvain et de Douai, contre

l'Histoire du Baïanisme, composée par le P. Duchesne, Jésuite, et condamné à Rome, le 17 de mars 1734, par Louis de Lomanise. A Avignon, chez Marc Chave, en 1738."

In the year 1741, he was again elevated to the position of provincial. He consistently maintains the same mode of governance, encouraging, reproving, beseeching, and doing so with all patience and doctrine. However, the duties of the provincialate do not fully occupy the capacity of such a genius; therefore, he resumes the ancient purpose. In the provincial assembly held in 1733 in Douai, under Father BILLUART himself, who was the Vicar General, at the insistence of the Very Reverend Moderators of our college, Saint Thomas of Douai, the Provincial Father-elect was entrusted with the task of providing means for arranging an erudite theologian of our Order, and publishing, for the common use of our province, a theological course according to the mind, and as far as possible, according to the letter of our Doctor Angelicus, Saint Thomas Aquinas, incorporating, as needed, questions pertaining to ecclesiastical history. This plan was agreeable to the Most Reverend Father Master General, and the execution of this work was

entrusted to Father Master BILLUART. This was rightfully so, as he was a man of consummate erudition and profound piety, who was accustomed to precede his speeches with prayer, and often, while others engaged in conversation, he prostrated himself before the altar contemplating the divine. However, distracted by various duties, he delayed somewhat in lending a hand to this significant endeavor.

From the year 1746 until the year 1751, he dedicated his efforts to the monumental and marvelous work under my care, consisting of nineteen volumes in octavo, titled "Summa S. Thoma hodiernis Academiarum moribus accommodata, sive cursus Theologiæ juxta mentem, et in quantum licuit, juxta ordinem et litteram Divi Thomæ in sua Summa, insertis pro re nata Digressionibus in Historiam ecclesiasticam. Ad usum Scholarum Thomisticarum." Published in Liège, at the printing press of Everard Kints, S.S.E., with the privilege of the Holy Roman Empire. The first three volumes, addressing the Cardinal Virtues, God, and the Angels, printed in the years 1746 and 1747, were dedicated to the serene Louis, Duke of Orléans, the first prince of the royal blood. I presented these volumes to the aforementioned

prince, who, before they went to press, had desired to read the manuscript. I cannot express with how much kindness and affability he received me, how he praised the work, and how many signs of goodwill he showed towards the author.

In 1748, three volumes on the First Part of the Second Part of Saint Thomas were published under the auspices of the illustrious and reverend Lord William Delvaux, Bishop of Ypres, who repeatedly demonstrated his affection for the work and the author through both words and deeds. In 1749, he was elected prior of his convent but declined. In the same year and the following, he published six volumes on the Third Part of Saint Thomas, with the first three dedicated to the Most Illustrious and Reverend Maximilian Vandernoot, Bishop of Ghent, and the other three to the Most Reverend Lord Vigor de Briois, the most ancient and celebrated abbot of the Abbey of Saint Vedast of Arras. It is known that these works pleased these prelates greatly, especially the abbot and his associates who belong to the ancient confederation of schools between the Vedastines and Dominicans.

In 1751, finally, the last two volumes on the Theological Virtues were published, dedicated to the Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord Dominic de Gentis, Bishop of Antwerp. This bishop praised both these volumes and the entire work with extraordinary commendations and recommended them to his clerics.

No one can help but marvel at the profound erudition, elegance, brevity of style, purity and solidity of doctrine in both moral and speculative matters that this work exhibits. It is praised and accepted by all as a faithful commentary on Saint Thomas. To speak the truth, in our age, no one has rendered greater services to the Thomistic school.

In 1752, he was unanimously proclaimed provincial for the third time. Certainly, the burden was heavy for an aged man, weakened by infirmities and constant labor. However, he courageously sustained it until the end, fulfilling it commendably.

Meanwhile, he reviewed his magnum opus, and finding it filled with errors due to the negligence of the printers, he prepared a more accurate and augmented edition. Unfortunately, he was prevented by death, leaving the task for his convent to carry out.

In 1754, he published a Compendium of his major work, distributed in six volumes and titled "Reverendiss. P. Magistro Generali Antonino Bremond, suo amico intimo." This friend had often summoned him to Rome, and even mentioned him to the Cassanatian Doctor, but the love of the brethren and his convent always prevailed. In this work, he gives a warning to the author of Theologia Christianae, who had imprudently accused him of laxity on the questions of the Superfluous Goods of the Clergy and Simony. With equal vigor, he directs repeated defenses of his thesis on the Relation of Works to God to the Doctor of Louvain, especially in the final section of the first volume of the Compendium, and others addressed to Louis Franc, issued a year later under that name.

Finally, in the last two years of his life, when he could barely breathe due to continuous pain and the weakness of his chest, for solace and to avoid boredom, he wrote treatises on the Work of the Six Days, Religious Life, and the Mysteries of Christ, as a supplement to his major work. It is regrettable that, preoccupied by death, he left the treatise on the Last Things incomplete and only outlined the first dissertation.

In the month preceding his death, unable to read the Sacred Scriptures, he arranged to celebrate Mass daily and frequently receive the Most Holy Eucharist. Sensing the imminent dissolution of his body, he nevertheless maintained sound judgment until the very end, requesting the Last Sacraments and the Indulgence of the Rosary.

On the twentieth of January in the year 1757, having spent the night with him, conversing about God, in the middle of the octave of Matins, beginning the seventy-third year of his age, he peacefully exchanged a life full of merits for that of days, and was buried the next day under a white marble in the middle

of the sanctuary. Upon it, I, in mourning, added the following epitaph, as an eternal token of gratitude and a memorial of the old man's friendship.

Behold that he did not labor for himself alone but for all who seek the truth, and that what is said of him is no less true than of the son of Onias, the priest who attained glory in his conduct among the Gentiles, enlarging the entrance of his house and courtyard. This man, greater than all praise and worthy of immortality, bore the yoke of the Lord from his youth, and he united all the qualities of a man, a religious, a prelate, and a scholar. Solid judgment and counsel accompanied him from a young age; prayer and study in solitude; wisdom and zeal in leadership; profound knowledge and deep humility in the academic chair; he blended in a marvelous harmony. Gracious and beneficent, he obliged everyone publicly and each one privately; a lover of harmony, an ardent promoter of the salvation of souls, and an eloquent preacher of the divine word; a good shepherd, an exemplar of virtues, and a teacher of teachers; beloved by his country and foreigners, generous to his convent, highly commended in matters of religion, and renowned in schools.

Therefore, a man, a religious, a prelate, and a scholar worthy of emulation by posterity. As you read these words and marvel, mourn the honor snatched away from the world, praise the prodigy of virtue, and pray for eternal rest for him who never rested so that the Church, religion, and country might find peace.

Spare, reader, the limitations of style and the brevity of expression; such a great man deserved a more elegant and elaborate pen, but I aimed for truth more than elegance.

Rest in Peace, O' Faithful Son of Saint Thomas!